



## **Buck Island Reef National Monument**

### **Public Service Announcement May 9, 2003**

On January 17, 2001, under the U.S. Coral Reef Initiative, former President Clinton expanded Buck Island Reef National Monument by Presidential Proclamation, No. 7392 from 880-acres to 19015-acres adding extensive marine resources to the park. The proclamation eliminated all extractive uses inside the new boundaries to ensure the protection of the objects and critical marine resources and all associated marine life in the park. Over 5000-acres of coral reef and 1100-acres of sea grass beds are now fully protected and Buck Island Reef is one of a few marine protected areas that include deep open ocean waters providing protection for migratory pelagic species. Protection of these resources will ultimately improve the health of all marine life inside and outside the park. These improved marine resources will enhance recreational opportunities, stimulate eco-tourism for St. Croix, increase educational opportunities, and provide for visitor enjoyment and inspiration for our and future generations.

To ensure that the public more fully understand the changes on going at Buck Island Reef National Monument we would like to provide the following summary of the interim regulations, the anchoring permit application process, and contact information for questions.

### **INTERIM REGULATIONS**

Proclamation No. 7392 supersedes the limited authorization for extractive uses identified in Proclamation No. 3443 of December 28, 1961, which created Buck Island Reef National Monument. For the purposes of protecting the objects identified in the monument on April 5, 2003 the Department of the Interior, National Park Service published the interim regulations for public comment. After the 30-day comment period on May 5, 2003 the interim regulations went into effect.

According to 36 Code of Federal Regulations Part 7, Section 7.73 Buck Island Reef National Monument -

- All extractive uses are prohibited within the boundaries of the Monument.
- Anchoring is prohibited except by permit in deep sand bottom areas, for administrative purposes, or as authorized by the park Superintendent.
- Anchoring will be permitted in emergency situations only to protect life and property.
- All forms of fishing are prohibited and the use or possession of any type of fishing equipment is prohibited within the boundaries of the Monument.

Violations of park regulations will require a mandatory appearance before the U. S. Magistrate and a fine ranging from \$50 to \$5000 and/or 6 month jail sentence.



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### **ANCHORING PERMIT**

According to the Proclamation the park Superintendent may issue permits for anchoring in deep sand bottom areas to the extent that it is consistent with the protection of the objects the park was created to protect. To ensure the continued enjoyment of Buck Island Reef the park Superintendent has designated an anchorage at Buck Island's West Beach area. This area, see attached map, outlines the customary anchorage off Buck Island's large sand beach and western picnic area. The park is moving rapidly to have the designated anchoring area buoyed in the near future. In order to comply with the interim regulations all vessels wishing to anchor in the designated anchorage will need an anchoring permit.

### **ANCHORING PERMIT PROCESS**

The following outlines the initial anchoring permit process, the application, and duration of the permit –

- An anchoring permit application requiring information about the applicant and his boat can be obtained from the NPS Headquarters, Fort Christiansvaern, in downtown Christiansted, St. Croix, Virgin Islands.
- Completed applications must be returned to NPS Headquarters for processing.
- On or before June 15, 2003 each anchoring permit applicant will be contacted with notification of required processing fee (which will be nominal) and once paid will receive an anchoring permit.
- Anchoring permits will include guidelines for safe anchoring at Buck Island Reef.
- Anchoring permit will be valid for one calendar year beginning July 1 to June 30.

### **VISITOR GUIDELINES**

To alleviate some confusion over park uses and guidelines and to reassure our visitors the following customary activities remain the same –

- Overnight anchoring at West Beach is permitted.
- Day use of the underwater trail moorings remains on a "first come, first serve" basis.
- No anchoring is allowed in lagoon or at the underwater trail.
- The pier on the south side of the island remains drop off and pick up only.
- Boats under 16 feet overall length can haul out on the beach area – outside posted bird-nesting area.
- Small boats (under 20 feet) anchoring bow and stern near the shoreline may continue to do so but all anchors must be placed in the wet sand below the high tide line.
- All fishing gear aboard any boat must be stowed and not in use while within park boundaries.
- Speed limit restrictions remain the same. No wake near the anchorage or lagoon.
- Responsible party must take all picnic trash off the island.
- Jet skis are prohibited within the park.